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U.S. Debt Crisis Illustrates Failure of Ideas

Cover Story

Historically high unemployment. Millions of families upside down in debt. A federal debt so large no one believes it could ever be repaid. Amidst the chaos Americans grasp for solutions.

But a shocking national debt (estimated to be around \$15 trillion, but could be as high as \$100 trillion when all federal spending obligations are taken into account) and flawed economic understanding are sinking the American public and the ship that has carried it so far — free markets and economic freedom. Problems like these don't arise in an intellectual vacuum. Ideas have consequences, and the rejection of a biblical Christian view of the world is proving catastrophic.

A Secular Humanist Worldview Wreaks Economic Havoc

Amidst the arguments that the U.S. problem is a lack of revenue, Christian economists say that the heart of the issue is reckless spending — poor stewardship of citizens' money — and a culture that shuns responsibility.

"We're going into debt too rapidly," said economist Dr. Paul Cleveland, who taught economics at Birmingham Southern College and also lectures at Summit Ministries worldview conferences.

Government spending is a hallmark policy of one of the most influential economists in history: John Maynard Keynes. Keynes advocated more power for governmental institutions to regulate the lives of citizens, up to the point of regulating how many children a family could have



and confiscating property and wealth, according to Dr. David Noebel, founder of Summit Ministries.

There are other ways in which the policies destroying our economy flow directly from a secular humanist worldview, according to Cleveland. As an example, he points to unfettered environmentalism that restricts what natural resources we can attempt to steward for our own.

"The mindset that you can't develop anything — we've got to get out of that," he said. He points to backlash against tapping into oil reserves in Alaska. "I doubt that caribou just drop dead at the site of an oil rig."

Further reckless spending on entitlements also indicates something about our culture. The more our society depends on the state to provide for the poor, the el-

derly, the disabled, and children, the less of a role local institutions and the church play in society. This leads to further secularization and reduces the awareness we should have of God's role in our everyday lives. For many, the state eventually replaces God when it comes to basic provision. "You're replacing your loyalty," Cleveland said.

Michael Miller, a research fellow and director of media for the Action Institute, agrees. "We're looking for the government to save us from ourselves," he said. [The national debt] is a reflection of our temptation to not be responsible for ourselves."

Miller is also working on a new endeavor, PovertyCure, that seeks to tackle global poverty through a proper understanding of the person and Scripture.

See **debt**, page 3

from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers

America's Choice

In 1938 British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was on top of the world. He had just capitulated to Adolf Hitler, but proclaimed victory: "Peace for our time," he crowed. Winston Churchill replied, "England has been offered a choice between war and shame. She has chosen shame, and will get war."

In our current financial crisis, America has been offered a choice between financial hardship and shameful national debt. She has chosen national debt and is getting financial hardship as well. Estimates of the total federal obligation are north of \$100 trillion. Here are my feeble analogies about how much that is:

- \$100 trillion is more than \$300,000 for every U.S. man, woman, and child.
- An old investment saying is, "If you want a *million* dollars, save \$500 a week for 40 years." Well, to get a *trillion* dollars, you'd have to save \$500 *million* a week for 40 years. To pay the federal debt, you'd have to multiply that amount by 100.
- The U.S. prints about \$6.4 billion in \$1 bills each year. At this rate, printing enough bills to pay a \$100 trillion debt would take well over 15,000 years.
- U.S. paper money is made mostly out of cotton. Printing enough \$1 bills to pay off a \$100 trillion dollar debt would take 18 years' worth of the *entire* United States cotton production.

What On Earth Can We Do?

During a recent visit with a Summit dad, a former hedge fund analyst, I asked, "How should I advise our Summit grads in the wake of this mess?" Reminding me that the financial laws of gravity haven't been repealed, he advised, "Get back to the basics and practice good financial hygiene." Here are some do's and don'ts:

- **Do** study and defend a biblical ap-



proach to economics based on stewardship, freedom, and private property. *Celebrate* rather than *condemn* wealth creation (consider as a starting point the **Economics Rescue Package** offered on the back cover of this newsletter).

- **Do** avoid personal debt, including student loans. Consider alternatives such as www.collegeplus.org to fight back against absurdly high tuition rates.

- **Do** exercise discipline in your spending, set a budget, flee the credit card devil, and save as much as you can — even if you're not getting a good return.

- **Do** give generously — God loves a cheerful giver.

- **Don't** be a stock market speculator. Invest only in things that have a solid underlying value.

- **Don't** trust anyone offering silver bullets. There's no easy way out of this crisis.

- **Don't** put up with the nonsense that government spending creates jobs.

- **Don't** let elected officials off the hook when they waffle on spending cuts and tax code revision.

One more thing: Whatever you think

about the gold standard, there's no question that it protected against unrestrained government spending. Removing it allowed the federal government to go on a binge that has birthed chaos and heartache. And that's not just the opinion of "fringe conservatives" either. In an Oct. 27 article in the *Wall Street Journal* (p. A19), the author acknowledged, "People are occupying Wall Street, blaming capitalism, speculation and greed, but rare is the analysis that traces all these problems back to the structural change in money that was brought about in the early 1970s."

The idea that we humans are clever enough to make reality bend to our will has proven disastrously wrong. Ideas have consequences. The question isn't whether we'll find an easy way out. It's whether we will continue hurtling toward oblivion or pursue an honorable course of repentance, discipline, and personal sacrifice.

A Different Look

Past issues of *The Journal* featured news clippings in the ten categories Dr. David Noebel focused on: theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. Given some of the crises we face in America today, we're experimenting with devoting more space to a deeper examination of fewer topics. Write me at jeff@summit.org or at PO Box 207, Manitou Springs, CO 80829, with your thoughts about how *The Journal* could be more helpful.

How's Doc Doing?

From his new home in Prescott, Arizona, President Emeritus Dr. David Noebel is enjoying retirement, reading as much as ever, and sending clippings to use in our publications. He's also still editing the *Schwarz Report* for the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade. If you'd like to see Doc's complete list of clippings for this month, you can write me and I'll send them to you, or you can go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/.

debt

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He sees America's current financial crisis — both at the federal level and for families and individuals — as the culmination of a “perfect storm” of bad traits: a relativistic, socialistic, hedonistic, and hyper-individualistic culture; political centralization where more power is placed with the federal government; and a system of managed capitalism where markets aren't really free. Rather, they are manipulated by big government in cooperation with big businesses.

Cries to simply increase revenues — namely by more taxation of the richest Americans and big corporations — will only go so far, says Eric Teetsel. Teetsel is the program manager for Values and Capitalism at the American Enterprise Institute. What has brought on so much debt is a culture of gross overspending. Increasing revenues may help in the short run, but the problem is behavioral, he said. “It's a spending culture, and that's what needs to change.”

A Nation's Economy Reflects Its Spiritual State

Some charge that capitalism run amok is the source of current economic problems. Not true, says Miller. Economics merely reflects the spiritual condition of a society and is actually a subset of ethics because it measures how moral beings act within markets. “We need free and responsible people to have a market economy,” he said.

The spending culture in Washington, D.C. — based largely on Keynesian economics and a secular humanist worldview — also runs afoul of biblical notions of what it means to be human. As dependence on state welfare increases, so too does the notion that humans can subsist without producing anything in return. But Scripture is clear: Work was ordained by God before the Fall, so work is inseparable

from the core of humanity.” God created us to do something,” Teetsel said. “Our souls matter, and anyone who's ever worked a hard day's work knows that.”

In terms of how the problem trickles down to families and individuals, Teetsel said he uses his tax return as perspective. With the \$500 million Solyndra debacle, where the federal government lent capital to a now-bankrupt, green-jobs company, Teetsel says he has tried to imagine how many thousands of Americans' tax contributions were wasted on the deal.

“That is maddening,” he said. “Everyone likes to think our taxes go to pave roads and pay the salaries of kindergarten teachers. But it's just not true.”

Cleveland said the notion of such frivolous stewardship butts up against the eighth commandment, which prohibits stealing. That's one reason he challenges the popular notion that Scripture does little to address the wide topic of economics. “When people say things like that, I don't think they've thought about it very long.”

Restoring a Biblical View Starts with Each of Us

While vocal protesters in recent weeks have smeared the free market, it still remains the system that allows the most freedom and benefits its citizens the greatest.

“It's hard to know why capitalism has gotten a bad rap,” Teetsel said. “We don't do a very good job of talking about the story of capitalism as a force for good.” Teetsel points to philosopher Adam Smith, known as the father of the free market economy. Prior to the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. There he postulated that in order for capitalism to work, morals and values must govern the individual. Trust and honesty in the market benefit

both producers and consumers.

Also worth noting is that capitalistic nations have typically been the most free, allowing for improved health, more education, and religious freedom. “These flow from free people,” Teetsel said.

Miller said that Christians can play a part by changing culture within the markets and offering maturity to an immature society. Many in society agree that consumerism and over-consumption are problems for Americans. But that's not the fault of free markets; the fault lies with us as a nation and the culture we have created.

“Christians need to stop blaming markets for why they buy stuff,” Miller said. “We have the freedom to say no, which is really kind of powerful.”

For those struggling to pay monthly bills, that may provide little solace now. But there are ways to avoid falling further into debt traps. According to Teetsel, many sound principles entrepreneurs use for success seem to correspond to biblical wisdom when it comes to finances: righteousness, dignity, thrift, and prudence. He emphasized that part of our calling as humans is to work. Therefore, even if one must find work he feels he is overqualified for just to pay the bills, there is dignity in that. Teetsel holds high respect for people who do what they need to support themselves and their families.

Overall, Cleveland echoed biblical warnings of debt — both for the state and the individual: “If you are a debtor, then you are a slave to your creditor. That limits what you can do.”

For more info, facts, and stats on the U.S. debt, see page 4.

breakdown

statistics and info about the debt crisis

Did You Know?

» For every dollar it spends, the U.S. borrows 41 cents.

Source: Acton Institute

» To cover the 2010 U.S. budget deficit, Congress would have to raise income taxes by 144 percent.

Source: Heritage Foundation

» In 2008, the top 10 percent of U.S. earners accounted for 70 percent of federal U.S. income tax revenue; the bottom 50 percent paid only 3 percent of income taxes; 49 percent of U.S. households paid no income taxes.

Source: Heritage Foundation

» The president has proposed closing the budget gap by increasing taxes only on those making more than \$250,000 and small businesses. To close the budget gap, this would require the top two tax brackets to be taxed at 132 percent and 142 percent, which is obviously impossible.

Source: Heritage Foundation

» The current U.S. public debt is estimated to be close to \$15 trillion. But that doesn't count unfunded obligations — future payments, mostly in the form of entitlements, due in the coming years if current law remains in place. Conservatively these add up to more than \$60 trillion.

Source: USA TODAY (Our economic sources indicate that USA TODAY is underestimating this by at least \$25 trillion — Ed.)

» If you earned one dollar every second, it would take you 416,000 years to earn enough money to pay off the full \$15 trillion in public debt.

Source: Cato Institute

Refuting Myth; Speaking Truth

» **Myth:** Reducing federal spending on welfare programs hurts the poor while Scripture clearly states that we should care for them instead.

» **Truth:** A March 2011 U.S. Government Accountability Report cites overlap and inefficiencies among the 18 federal food assistance programs. The study shows that in fiscal year 2008, Congress shoveled anywhere from \$8 million to \$37 billion into each of the programs. The study found so much overlap between the programs that enormous amounts of money were wasted and many clients were so confused about applying for aid they may not have applied at all. And that's after studying only 7 of the 18 programs. Bottom line: good intentions aren't enough — people are being hurt by poorly run programs that need drastic overhaul before they can truly help the poor.

» **Myth:** There's only so much wealth to go around, so we need to make sure it's divided fairly. We need to slice the pie carefully.

» **Truth:** Wealth can be created; that's why economies can actually grow. The more wealth that's created, the more those in the market place with much wealth and a correct worldview can reach out and help those with less wealth.

» **Myth:** Capitalism run amok created the housing crisis.

» **Truth:** Yes, some lenders acted irresponsibly in how they traded securities and lent capital. But it was Congress that first pushed banks to grant mortgages to risky borrowers in an attempt to give more people a shot at "the American dream." Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac also contributed by backing mortgages that weren't reliable. What has truly run amok are government programs and their sponsors in Congress.

» **Myth:** Unrestrained free markets are responsible for the economic mess we're in now.

» **Truth:** Technically, we don't even have free markets. Our economy is managed by the federal government and is under the influence of big businesses via lobbyists. Through those entities, economic regulations are passed and our currency and lending practices are manipulated. Really, the markets aren't all that free. A free market approach is one thing that needs to be restored.

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel

Editor's Note: Even though Dr. David Noebel has officially retired, we still want to let you know what he's reading and thinking about in "A Look at our World."

Sociology

As the states go deeper and deeper into debt, liberals keep finding new ways to go deeper and deeper into our pocket books to teach people things they can easily learn by themselves. There is no better example than the recent spate of universities that have decided to help lost and helpless homosexuals find themselves spiritually. This sudden revival of interest in religion in our secular universities is a queer one, indeed.

— Mike Adams,
Townhall.com
Sept. 26, 2011

Divorce has been declining since the 1980s, which is good news for children — but only for those children whose parents bother to marry in the first place. A new study by the Institute for American Values and the National Marriage

Project at the University of Virginia shows that a growing threat to marriage and children's well-being is cohabitation, which has increased 14-fold since 1970, with 40 percent of American children experiencing it by age twelve. W. Bradford Wilcox, one of the authors of the report, explains that "children in cohabitating relationships are more likely to do poorly in school, to use drugs, to have emotional problems, and to be abused, compared with children in intact, married families." What makes the trend particularly worrisome is its adoption by the working and lower-middle classes, even as marriage seems to have strengthened as a norm among members of the college-educated upper-middle class. It's a tale of two Americas you aren't likely to hear about on the campaign trail.

— *National Review*
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 10

A North Carolina bill to allow voters a chance to define marriage in their state constitution goes to the state Senate after passing the state House.

The 75-42 vote followed a lengthy debate, dominated by the opponents of the amendment. . . .

But for most of three hours Democratic members decried the amendment, calling it "unconscionable," "extreme," and reminiscent of the state's discrimination against blacks.

This "contemptible" bill "takes our state backwards" in terms of respecting people, said state Rep. Deborah K. Ross. This bill "is not God, not even close," said openly gay Rep. Marcus Brandon. . . .

At a press conference two weeks ago, a group of black pastors, including the Rev. Johnny Hunter of Fayetteville, said

that marriage was a divine relationship between a man and a woman, and that gay-rights groups had hijacked the civil rights movement for their own "immoral" purposes.

— Cheryl Wetzstein,
The Washington Times
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 20

Islam

After 9/11, the normal and decent question that normal and decent people, people who fully and happily recognize the existence of vast numbers of normal and decent Muslims in the world, would have posed is this:

What has happened in the Arab world and parts of the Muslim world?

But as this, the most obvious question that 9/11 prompted, has not been allowed to be asked, what lessons can possibly be learned?

The answer, of course, is none.

But that has not stopped our media and academic elites from drawing lessons.

And what are those lessons? One is that America, not the Islamic world, must engage in introspection.

The other is that we must oppose all expressions of religious extremism, Jewish, Christian, as well as Muslim, since, according to the Left, America's conservative Christians are as much a threat to humanity as are extreme Muslims.

— Dennis Prager,
The Washington Times
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 31

Politics

The reality of social entropy is that enterprise doesn't just happen, since without consistent effort, things fall

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a look at our world

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apart. Time is money: If “creating jobs” is really Job. No. 1 for President Obama, he should want business leaders to have as much time as possible to make more money, because they’ll do that by expanding production, and that normally means employing more people.

Job-creating business leaders are public servants, and if a corporate jet saves them time, not only the company but the United States will benefit. I should also point out that thoughtful Christians in business work long hours primarily because they know God wants them to use the talents He gave them to create an environment in which employees can use their talents.

You may think this talk of public-servant executives and altruistic Christians is all kerfuffle. You may think corporate jets are just perks for fat cats. If you are thinking that, and if you’re right, I have two words

for you: So what?

Here is where original sin comes in. If men were angels, remuneration wouldn’t matter as long as an executive’s family simply had a roof over its head and enough to eat. But the impact of original sin is that money talks. Dollars, and maybe private planes, keep executives at the plow when they’d rather be golfing. It’s a small price to pay for those who would build businesses that create jobs.

— Marvin Olasky,
WORLD Magazine
Sept. 24, 2011, p. 76

Is the earth currently in a warming phase? If so, is that a bad thing? And if it’s a bad thing, what should we do about it? Former vice president Al Gore says yes, the earth is warming; it’s a terribly, *unprecedentedly* bad thing (“the very existence of our

civilization is threatened”); and massive government action is called for, something akin to war socialism. When speaking of those holding contrary opinions, Gore can barely contain himself. . . . One day, Gore promised viewers of a webcasting service, doubters will be looked on like *racists*. What, are the doubters burning crosses on climatologists lawns? No, no; what the ex-veep means is, this is an opinion good citizens *should not have*. One day, we hope, we will look back on this shabby use of the civil-rights struggle with embarrassment.

— *The National Review*
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 12

To see all of Doc’s readings, go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/

news and notes

updates on programs, faculty, alumni, and other summit happenings

Faculty/Staff

Dr. Alex McFarland debated American Atheist President David Silverman on Nov. 17 at Church for All Nations in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The debate was broadcast live.

McFarland is a Summit faculty member and is also the author of several books on apologetics. His latest, *10 Answers for Skeptics*, was recently released. It tackles questions commonly posed by skeptics of Christianity.

For more information on the debate or McFarland’s book, visit his website at www.alexmcfarland.com.

Samuel J. Youngs and **Randall G. Hardman**, two former Summit staff members, each had articles published in the October edition of *American Theological Inquiry*.

Youngs’ piece is entitled “Wounds of the Emptied God: The Role of Kenosis at the Cross in the Christologies of Jürgen Moltmann and Sergius Bulgakov.”

Hardman’s article is a review of the book *The Problem with Evangelical Theology: Testing the Exegetical Foundations of Calvinism, Dispensationalism, and Wesleyanism* by Ben Witherington, III.

Rapid Response

Summit’s newest resource was published in October. **Rapid Response** seeks to give Summit readers insightful responses to the latest news stories, along with talking points and important questions to ask while dialoguing with others.

Summit’s first Rapid Response was on the Occupy Wall Street movement now growing across the nation. It’s available at www.summit.org. You can also sign up to receive Rapid Response via email by writing to michael@summit.org. Write “Rapid Response” in the subject line.

Neugebauer: Summit Gave Me the Tools



Summit alumnus Toby Neugebauer, with his wife, Melissa, and sons Nate (left) and Noah (right)

Twenty years after attending Summit as a student, Toby Neugebauer still keeps books from Summit founder Dr. David Noebel on his nightstand.

Neugebauer, a New York University graduate, now runs a private equity fund that he co-founded in 1998 — Quantum Energy Partners, based in Houston, Texas. His firm manages nearly \$6 billion for its clients, focusing on energy production around the world.

Neugebauer spoke earlier this summer to students at the Summit in Colorado, outlining the debt crisis currently embroiling America and the world. Noting that he had recently delivered the same presentation to Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, Neugebauer told Summit's new president Dr. Jeff Myers, "I think your students understood more and asked better questions than some of the national

leaders I've spoken to."

Neugebauer started meeting world leaders while traveling the globe on business and riding the campaign trail with his congressman father, for whom he served as campaign manager. When he meets with movers and shakers, Neugebauer uses his Summit training to walk them through how wrong worldviews have led us to the social, political, and economic trials we face today.

Neugebauer notes that he was a skeptic of John Maynard Keynes and Keynesian economics even before attending Summit, but listening to Noebel brought a new sense of clarity. "I didn't understand how strong our cause was," Neugebauer said of the biblical worldview. He describes Summit as a "confidence builder" and also credits his two-week experience for strengthening his faith by showing him how biblical principles just make sense.

Neugebauer was midway through earning a degree in business administration when he came to Manitou Springs in the early '90s, and thinks he would still be involved in business even without Summit's influence. But he said without those lessons, he would have been far less effective in articulating, researching, and understanding ideas at play today.

"Summit brought me a set of tools," he said. "My life has been enriched."

Speaking to students last summer, Neugebauer offered a blow-by-blow explanation of the debt crisis and speculated that this period will be studied by future generations as much as World War II is studied now.

"Our worldview has never been more violently under attack than it is today," Neugebauer said in a recent phone interview. "I can't think of anything more serious." In addition to passing on his life lessons to Summit students, Neugebauer and his wife Melissa, also a Summit grad, have expressed their gratefulness to Summit by hosting events for David Noebel and supporting Summit financially.

Neugebauer is looking forward to sending his two sons to Summit as soon as they are old enough. He's especially interested in Summit Oxford, a semester-long program where students study at Oxford University in England.

"Our time is quickly approaching," he promised.

Neugebauer's Summit lecture is available at <http://vimeo.com/29115347>, or you can order a DVD copy as part of the **Economics Rescue Package** featured on the back cover.



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“The free market is greedy. Jesus was a socialist. Capitalism deserves to die.”

You hear these absurd arguments every day, but how would you respond? With Summit's **Economics Rescue Package** you can defend a biblical view of ethics and the free market.

The **Economics Rescue Package** includes:

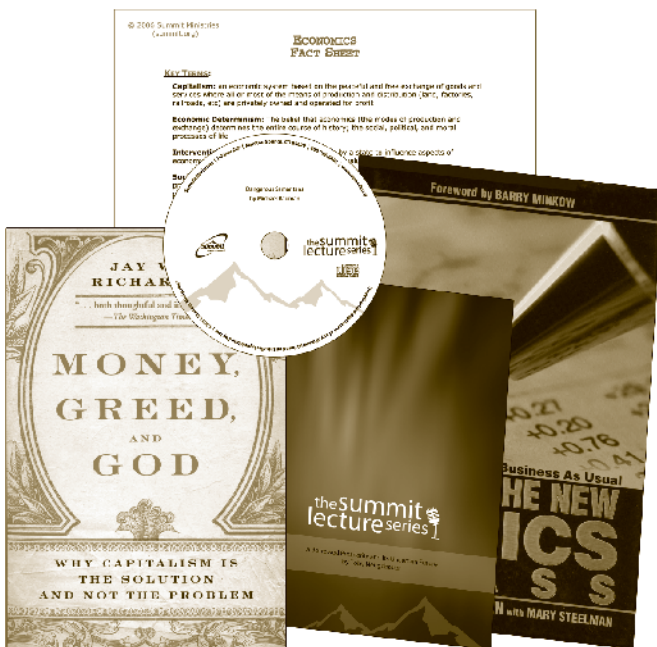
Book: *Money, Greed and God* (Jay Richards) demolishes the eight myths about the free market and shows how wealth creation is the best route to social justice.

Book: *The Rise of the Ethics Class* (Steve Austin) applies biblical ethics to the business world and responds to corporate practices that hurt everyday Americans.

DVD: Summit grad and businessman Toby Neugebauer delivers the same briefing he gave to Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke!

CD: Summit instructor Michael Bauman shows how to wisely aid the poor.

Fact Sheet: A listing of key scripture passages, memorable quotes, and a thorough bibliography of free market apologetics.



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The Journal is the monthly publication of American Christian College (dba Summit Ministries), a non-profit, educational, religious corporation operating under the laws of the states of Oklahoma and Colorado.

PO Box 207, Manitou Springs, Colorado 80829 | Phone: 866.786.6483 | URL: www.summit.org | E-mail: journal@summit.org

a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel

History

The settling of America was, of course, a result of economic and other motives, as well as religious ones. Yet religion was still central. Although less important in New York and the Carolinas, religion was a predominant motive in the creation of the other colonies. Virginia, as John Butler says, had “religious origins.” Quakers and Methodists settled in Pennsylvania. Catholics established a beachhead Maryland. Religious intensity was undoubtedly greatest among the Puritans, especially in Massachusetts. They took the lead in defining their settlement based on a “Covenant with God” to create “a city on a hill.” In the 17th and 18th centuries, Americans defined their mission in the New World in biblical terms. They were a “chosen people,” on an “errand in the wilderness,” creating “the new Israel” or the “new Jerusalem” in what was clearly the “promised land.” America was the site of a “new Heaven and a new earth, the home of justice,” God’s country.

American Protestantism differs from European Protestantism, particularly those denominations, Anglican or Lutheran, that have involved established churches. This difference was noted by Edmund Burke, who contrasted the fear, awe, duty, and reverence Englishmen felt toward political and religious authorities with the “fierce spirit of liberty” among Americans. This spirit, he argued, was rooted in the distinctively American brand of Protestantism. The Americans “are Protestants, and of that kind which is the most averse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most

prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance: it is the dissidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religion.”

This dissidence was manifest from the first with the settlements of the Pilgrims and the Puritans of New England. The Puritan message, style, and assumptions, if not doctrines, spread throughout the colonies and became absorbed into the beliefs and outlooks of other Protestant groups. In some measure, as Tocqueville said, “the entire destiny of America” was shaped by the Puritans. The “religious zeal and the religious conscience” of New England, James Bryce agreed, in “large measure passed into the whole nation.” Qualified, modified, diffused, the Puritan legacy became the American essence. While “England had a Puritan Revolution without creating a Puritan society, America created a Puritan society without enduring a Puritan revolution.”

— Samuel P. Huntington
The American Conservative
April 12, 2004, p. 8f

As American families sit down to their traditional Thanksgiving feasts, they will naturally recall the familiar story of the Pilgrim and, in the process, distort the true character of the nation’s religious heritage.

Most children learn that the Mayflower settlers came to the New World to escape persecution and to establish religious freedom. But the early colonists actually pursued purity, not tolerance, and sought to build fervent, faith-based utopias, not secular regimes that that consigned religion to a secondary role. The distinctive circumstances that al-

lowed these fiery believers of the varied denominations to cooperate in the founding of a new nation help to explain America’s contradictory religious traditions — as simultaneously the most devoutly Christian society in the Western world, and the country most accommodating to every shade of exotic belief and practice.

Concerning the Pilgrims who celebrated the First Thanksgiving in 1621, they didn’t travel directly from their English homes to the “hideous and desolate wilderness” of Massachusetts. They sailed the Atlantic Ocean only after living for 12 years in flourishing communities in Holland, the most tolerant and religiously diverse nation in Europe. They left the Netherlands not because that nation imposed too many religious restrictions but because the Dutch honored too few.

The like-minded Puritans who followed them (and whose much larger settlement of Massachusetts Bay annexed the Pilgrims’ Plymouth in 1691) showed similar determination to build a model of single-minded religious rigor. The leaders of this idealistic venture were in no sense the victims of oppression back home, but rather counted as wealthy and influential gentlemen who wielded considerable political influence. Even after their fellow Puritans won total power (and executed a king in 1649), the Massachusetts colonists chose to remain in their “city upon a hill” in the New World than to return to the compromises and complications with England’s fractious politics.

The Pilgrims and their spiritual descendants never had to retreat from religious fervor or biblical demands to join the new Republic, thanks to the

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continued existence of more or less autonomous religious enclaves. No one can suggest that our Founders embraced secularism or relativism, but they did come to accept the notion of separate faith communities following their own rules, while managing to cooperate where absolutely necessary.

Thanksgiving in that sense doesn't celebrate religious freedom, but rather coexistence. We remain a nation of impassioned, fiercely committed, openly competing believers who have nonetheless established a long tradition of letting other faith communities go their own way. We can be pious and uncompromising at our own Thanksgiving tables, without menacing, or even questioning, the very different proceedings, in the home next door. The limitless boundaries and vast empty land of the fresh continent, plus the challenges of a long Revolutionary struggle, gave the faith-filled fanatics of the founding the chance for a freedom more profound than mere religious tolerance: the right, in their own communities, to be left alone.

— Michael Medved
USA TODAY
November 23, 2009, p. 17A

Origins

The more I study science, the more I am impressed with the thought that this world and universe have a definite design — and a design suggests a designer. It may be possible to have design without a designer, picture without an artist, but my mind is unable to conceive of such a situation. Evidences of design are everywhere about us . . . The greatest aspect of design visible to us in the ordered

movement of the stars and planets in this solar system and in other solar systems extending on and on through space — a design almost incomprehensibly large. At the other extreme we find all matter composed of invisible atoms, each of which in turn is a solar system almost inconceivably small, with electrons swinging in orbits around the atomic nuclei somewhat as planets circle about the sun. And everywhere in between these extremes we find evidence of design . . . And so it goes — everywhere there is design. Everything is conforming to definite forces acting upon it, is obeying natural laws applicable to its particular state. Whence come these natural laws? There we find the Creator.

— Paul Amos Moody
Introduction to Evolution
P, 497-98

Physicists have stumbled upon signs that the cosmos is custom-made for life and consciousness. It turns out that if the constants of nature — unchanging numbers like the strength of gravity, the charge of an electron and the mass of a protein — were the tiniest bit different, then atoms would not hold together, stars would not burn and life would never have made an appearance. “When you realize that the laws of nature must be incredibly finely tuned to produce the universe we see,” says John Polkinghorne, who had a distinguished career as a physicist at Cambridge University before becoming an Anglican priest in 1982, “that conspires to plant the idea that the universe did not just happen, but that there must be a purpose behind it.” Charles Townes, who shared the 1964 Nobel Prize in Physics for discovering

the principles of the laser, goes further: “Many have a feeling that somehow intelligence must have been involved in the laws of the universe.”

— *Newsweek*
July 20, 1998, p. 48-49

The Mideast's latest archaeological sensation is all about Edom.

The Bible says Edom's kings interacted with ancient Israel, but some scholars have confidently declared that no Edomite state could have existed that early.

The latest archaeological work indicates the Bible got it right, those experts got it wrong and some write-ups need rewriting. The findings also could buttress disputed biblical reports about kings David and Solomon.

Edom was a rugged land south and east of the Dead Sea in present-day southern Jordan. The Bible reports that Edom had kings before Israel (Genesis 36:31, 1 Chronicles 1:43) and that they barred Moses' throng after the Exodus (Numbers 20:14-21) and later warred with David (2Samuel 8:13-14, 1 Kings 11:15-16).

Traditional dating puts David's rule from 1012 B.C. to 972 B.C., followed by Solomon through 932 B.C. By looser reckoning, their monarchy emerged around 1000 B.C. (the exodus came long before).

The doubters figured the Bible erred because the earliest discovered remains from Edom and non-biblical references dated back only to the eighth century B.C. Such thinking ignored the old archaeological warning that “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.”

— Richard N. Ostling

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South Bend Tribune
February 17, 2005

Sociology

As the states go deeper and deeper into debt, liberals keep finding new ways to go deeper and deeper into our pocket books to teach people things they can easily learn by themselves. There is no better example than the recent spate of universities that have decided to help lost and helpless homosexuals find themselves spiritually. This sudden revival of interest in religion in our secular universities is a queer one, indeed.

A document titled, "Religious Identity, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Gender Expression," housed on the UNC website and produced with state funded research says the following:

"Many LGBTQ identified people struggle with their religious or spiritual beliefs at some point in the coming out process. This section will give you some resources with which you can educate yourself about various religious and spiritual communities' beliefs regarding faith and LGBTQ-identified persons."

Sounds either great or grate depending on your politics. But what does the state have to say about LGBTQ-LM-NOPersons and Christianity? Where should they go to learn about Christian stances on these issues? The government agents of inclusion provide six sources. One can only marvel at the diversity of the following choices:

1. The Institute for Welcoming Resources <http://www.welcomingresources.org> The purpose of this ecumenical group is to provide the resources to facilitate a paradigm shift in multiple denominations whereby churches become welcoming and affirming of all

congregants regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. (A paradigm shift sounds pretty costly at first, but, upon further reflection, a paradigm is only twenty cents).

2. Gay Christians www.gaychristians.org. Information and chat network of friends affirming God's acceptance and love of all people regardless of their sexual or affectional orientation. (This may have been where Kip met LaFawn-duh. I always thought she was really a he! Soul mate? More like soul brother!)

3. Inspiritus www.inspiritus.myweb.nl. Inspirational page with focus on those who are seeking to reconcile Christian faith and homosexuality; also includes excellent coming out stories from Christian LGBTQ individuals. (Shouldn't they call this Out-spirit-us? Just saying.).

4. Soulforce www.soulforce.org. The purpose of Soulforce is freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious and political oppression through the practice of relentless nonviolent resistance. (How many of you knew that gays were still enslaved in 21st Century America? And I just hired a new interior decorator for no reason!).

5. The Bible and the Homosexual <http://www.postfun.com/pfp/homosexual.html>. Addresses the sections in the Bible that are most used to condemn LGBTQ persons. (This can generally be accomplished by defining words like "sin" and "abomination" as hate speech. Hence, it is no longer a *** or an ***** to engage in sodomy).

6. Steps to Recovery from Bible Abuse <http://www.truluck.com/index.html>. This site has a link to a page that addresses the sections in the Bible that

are most used to condemn LGBTQ persons. (Bible abuse includes but is not limited to those who have actually been thumped by a Bible on one or more occasions).

Just in case the above entanglement between church and state is not quite enough for the enlightened liberal intellectual, there is more. The UNC website directs you to more state-recommended websites that get into specific denominational stances:

1. Axios www.eskimo.com/~nickz/axios.html provides Eastern Orthodox Gay and Lesbian Christians, resources and links. (This makes sense. Some people are only attracted to the Eastern Orthodox Church because of the hats. Gay people like hats, too – especially Red Sox hats. I can see a connection).

2. Rainbow Baptists www.rainbowbaptists.org. Rainbow Baptists is a website providing support, information and advocacy for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer identified Baptists, their family and friends. (It makes sense that the homosexuals have hijacked the rainbow. They think Noah's son really enjoyed seeing his father naked. And that's why they are always trying to force the Boys Scouts to follow them on weekend excursion into the woods to pitch tents).

3. Catholic www.dignityusa.org. DignityUSA works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy and support. (This one is way too easy. Pass).

4. Disciples of Christ www.gladalliance.org. The Gay, Lesbian, and Affirm-

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ing Disciples Alliance is an organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and affirming members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). They call for the full inclusion of LGBT persons in the Church. They provide educational resources to the Church on issues important to LGBT Christians. (I could see Chaz Bono as a Baptist preacher despite the sex change. But do they have to accept his dancing, too?).

5. More Light Presbyterians <http://www.mlp.org>. A network of people seeking the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of faith in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church. (I think we need more Presbyterians who are light in the loafers. It helps them tip-toe through the TULIP without getting stuck on “total depravity”).

At first glance, it would appear that Jewish homosexuals and Islamic homosexuals are excluded from the UNC effort to be inclusive. Nothing could be further from the truth. UNC is proud to recommend a couple of Jewish faith websites:

1. Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group <http://www.jglg.org.uk/>. The purpose of this organization is to provide an atmosphere of friendship and support for Jewish gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their partners. Organize social, religious and informative events for our members and their guests. To act as ambassadors between the gay world and the Jewish world, trying to dispel ignorance and prejudice. (Making peace between the gay world and the Jewish world could take a Lot of patience. But I think it's all about hospitality not Sodomy!).

2. The World Congress of Gay,

Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Jews: Keshet Ga'avah <http://www.glbtejews.org/>. The organization consists of around 50 member organizations (did they really say “member organizations”?) all over the world. The World Congress wishes: to be the worldwide voice of LGBT Jews; to support, inspire, and strengthen local groups; to foster a sense of community among diverse individuals and organizations; to achieve equality and security for LGBT Jews worldwide.

Islamic homosexuals can really celebrate the inclusion of the Muslim Faith Websites like Queer Jihad www.queerjihad.org. (I guess a queer jihad is better than a straight one. Queer jihad-ists probably clean up nicely after they're done killing the infidels. But, seriously, at least UNC has finally recognized the existence of the term jihad).

It is strange for many to sit back and watch these UNC system spending habits in a year where they are faced with a 15.8% budget cut. They could easily cut back on their commitment to sexual diversity. Instead, they cut a year off their nursing program. No word yet on whether they are contemplating taking a year off of campaigning for same-sex marriage and trying to grow the homosexual church in America.

— Mike Adams,
Townhall.com
Sept. 26, 2011

Divorce has been declining since the 1980s, which is good news for children — but only for those children whose parents bother to marry in the first place. A new study by the Institute for American Values and the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia

shows that a growing threat to marriage and children's well-being is cohabitation, which has increased 14-fold since 1970, with 40 percent of American children experiencing it by age twelve. W. Bradford Wilcox, one of the authors of the report, explains that “children in cohabitating relationships are more likely to do poorly in school, to use drugs, to have emotional problems, and to be abused, compared with children in intact, married families.” What makes the trend particularly worrisome is its adoption by the working and lower-middle classes, even as marriage seems to have strengthened as a norm among members of the college-educated upper-middle class. It's a tale of two Americas you aren't likely to hear about on the campaign trail.

— *National Review*
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 10

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— *National Review*
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 10

A North Carolina bill to allow voters a chance to define marriage in their state constitution goes to the state Senate on Tuesday, after passing the state House.

The 75-42 vote followed a lengthy debate, dominated by opponents of the amendment.

If it passes, it will go on the May 2012 ballot.

North Carolina is the only Southeastern state without voter-approved language in the state constitution that defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

House Majority Leader Paul Stam, a Republican and lead sponsor of the bill, led off Monday's debate by noting that one of the first laws in the state was that marriage was between a man and a woman.

This amendment needs to go before the voters because they need to decide what is marriage, not judges in courts, said Mr. Stam. Iowa, he added, once had a law like North Carolina's that said marriage was only between a man and a woman, but the Iowa Supreme Court struck it down and allowed gay marriage. "Folks, we are in the same situation," he said.

"People want to vote" on this definition of marriage, said Speaker Pro Tempore Dale R. Folwell, another Republican supporter.

But for most of three hours, Demo-

cratic members decried the amendment, calling it "unconscionable," "extreme" and reminiscent of the state's discrimination against blacks.

This "contemptible" bill "takes our state backwards" in terms of respecting people, said state Rep. Deborah K. Ross. This bill "is not God, not even close," said openly gay Rep. Marcus Brandon.

The amendment now goes to the state Senate, where three-fifths of that chamber must pass it if it is to go to voters. The governor cannot veto the bill.

The amendment, which was passed by a House committee earlier on Monday, says that marriage between one man and one woman "is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this state." It clarifies that it does not prohibit private parties from entering into contracts.

The amendment called for a vote in May 2012, when primary elections are held, rather than the general election in November 2012. This was done to "remove politics" from the issue, House Speaker Thom Tillis told a news conference.

Republicans took control of both chambers in 2010 for the first time since 1896, freeing them to take action on a "defense of marriage" amendment.

Equality North Carolina, which supports gay marriage, brought nearly 50,000 postcards opposing the amendment to lawmakers Monday.

At a press conference last week, a group of black pastors, including the Rev. Johnny Hunter of Fayetteville, said that marriage was a divine relationship between a man and a woman, and that gay-rights groups had hijacked the civil rights movement for their own "im-

moral" purposes.

— Cheryl Wetzstein,
The Washington Times
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 20

Education

If you were the devil, what would be your most important mission, other than inventing false religions?

It would be to corrupt innocent children.

I'd start by kicking God out of the public schools and excising from textbooks the truth about America's deeply Christian heritage. I'd get rid of glaringly obvious ties between Christianity and the Founders' vision of unalienable rights and limited government. Children would be indoctrinated to think of themselves as cosmic accidents of random mutation and survival of the fittest, not precious beings with eternal souls created in the image of God. The result would be an effectively atheistic system of moral relativism.

Next, I'd cloak sexual promiscuity in terms of self-fulfillment, mix it up with junk science, and lobby the teachers unions to openly promote the Kinsey sex education model of children as "sexual beings" whose "orientation" has no moral relevance.

Finally, I'd expose the kids to outright propaganda through clever websites designed to promote deviance and to brand anyone with any qualms (such as parents) as hate-filled bigots and bullies.

If any school districts resist, I'd slap them with legal threats. And that's where the devil's law firm comes in.

The ACLU is running around the country, shaking their fists at school districts and demanding that kids **be**

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exposed to whatever the gay movement deems appropriate. In Prince William County, Virginia, after an ACLU threat, school officials removed the filter blocking homosexual websites. The Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal group, has sent letters to eight school districts, including Prince William, advising them that they have every right to keep the filters. But Prince William has caved, at least for now.

In Missouri, the ACLU sued the Camdenton School District on August 15 in U.S. District Court because it refused to remove its general “sexuality” filter. The district had responded in a May letter to the ACLU from Superintendent Tim Hadfield, who wrote that the district “does not explicitly block” LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) categories, but that some were blocked because of the “sexuality” filter. He said the filter settings were “acceptable for our general audience within our network of Pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students,” according to Fox News. The district later unblocked some sites dealing with bullying, but the ACLU is complaining that the filter still blocks “hundreds” of LGBT sites.

A question. Why, if the LGBT agenda is just about civil rights and tolerance, is the “sexuality” filter blocking all those sites? Could it be that the LGBT “community,” whose pride parades are the only public marches that regularly feature nudity and obscene and sacrilegious signs, has an abundance of sites that parents would rather their children not visit?

The ACLU has also launched the Don’t Filter Me! campaign, which pressures software companies that sell

filters to schools to remove any filter that blocks “gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender websites.” So far, the ACLU claims that it has pressured at least one software company, Lightspeed Systems, to remove a school filter that flagged “LGBT-supportive content.”

In a tight economy, the ACLU is counting on companies doing almost anything to avoid controversy. And they are hoping that strapped school districts will quickly surrender rather than spend money on lawyers’ fees. Their claim: “This viewpoint discrimination violates students’ First Amendment rights to free speech and the Equal Access Act. Simply put: It’s illegal.”

No, it’s not. Schools, like public libraries, do not have to provide any and all materials just because someone wants them to do so. In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in *United States vs. American Library Association, Inc.* CIPA bars federal funds to public libraries that do not install software “to block images that constitute obscenity or child pornography, and to prevent minors from obtaining access to material that is harmful to them.”

Having lost the library fight, the ACLU is concentrating on schoolchildren.

— Robert Knight
The Washington Times
September 19, 2011, p. 29

An honors student in Fort Worth, TX, was sent to the principal’s office and punished for telling a classmate that he believes homosexuality is wrong.

Holly Pope said she was “absolutely stunned” when she received a telephone

call from an assistant principal at Western Hills High School informing her that her son, Dakota Ary, had been sent to in-school suspension.

“Dakota is a very well-grounded 14-year-old,” she told Fox News Radio noting that her son is an honors student, plays on the football team and is active in his church youth group. “He’s been in church his whole life and he’s been taught to stand up for what he believes.”

And that’s what got him in trouble.

Dakota was in a German class at the high school when the conversation shifted to religion and homosexuality in Germany. At some point during the conversation, he turned to a friend and said that he was a Christian and “being a homosexual is wrong.”

“It wasn’t directed to anyone except my friend who was sitting behind me,” Dakota told Fox. “I guess [the teacher] heard me. He started yelling. He told me he was going to write me an infraction and send me to the office.”

Dakota was sentenced to one day in-school suspension – and two days of full suspension. His mother was flabbergasted, noting that her son had a spotless record, was an honor student, volunteered at his church and played on the school football team.

Officials at the high school did not return calls for comment. However, the Fort Worth Independent School District issued a statement that read:

“As a matter of course, Fort Worth ISD does not comment on specific employee or student-related issues. Suffice it to say that we are following district policy in our review of the circumstances and any resolution will likewise be in accordance with district policy.”

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After a meeting with Pope and her attorney, the school rescinded the two-day suspension so Dakota would be allowed to play in an upcoming football game.

"They've righted all the wrongs," said Matt Krause, an attorney with the Liberty Counsel. "This should have no lasting effect on his academic or personal record going forward."

Pope contacted the Liberty Counsel immediately after her son was punished.

"I told the school that he should never have been suspended for exercising his Constitutional rights," Krause told Fox News Radio. "The principal is sincere in trying to do the right thing and hopefully they will tell the teacher, 'Do not do that anymore.' He won't be pushing his agenda."

Krause called the incident "mind blowing" and said the teacher had frequently brought homosexuality into ninth grade classroom discussions.

"There has been a history with this teacher in the class regarding homosexual topics," Krause said. "The teacher had posted a picture of two men kissing on a wall that offended some of the students."

Krause said the picture was posted on the teacher's "world wall."

"He told the students this is happening all over the world and you need to accept the fact that homosexuality is just part of our culture now," Krause said.

The school district would not comment on why a teacher was discussing homosexuality in a ninth grade German class.

"In German class there should be no talk of being pro-Gay or homosexual topics," Krause said.

Dakota's mother said she believes

the teacher should apologize.

"He should never have been punished," Pope said. "He didn't disrupt the class. He wasn't threatening. He wasn't hostile. He made a comment to his friend and the teacher overheard it."

"My son knows people that are homosexual," she said. "He's not saying, 'I don't like you.' He's saying, 'I'm a Christian and I believe that being that way is wrong.'"

Krause said school leaders told Dakota that in the future he should be careful when and where he talks about his opposition to homosexuality – suggesting that he talk about such matters in the hallway instead of the classroom.

He said Liberty Counsel will monitor the situation to make sure there is no future retaliation. Meantime, Pope said her son will return to the teacher's classroom.

"I've told him to treat this teacher with respect," she said. "He is your elder. He is your teacher. What his beliefs are or what they are not – outside the school is none of our business."

— Todd Starnes

Fox News

September 22, 2011

Islam

In attempting to understand 9/11, the first question asked by the world's elites -- as exemplified by leading media and academics -- was, "What did America do to provoke such hatred?"

Ten years later, the same people are still asking the same question. And it is as morally repulsive now as it was then. It was always on par with "What did the Jews do to antagonize the Germans?"

or "What did blacks do to enrage lynch mobs?"

As long as people keep asking what America did to incite such hate, nothing will have been learned from 9/11.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks occurred because of a law of human life that has been true since Cain killed Abel: The worst hate the best (and the second best and the third best and so on). Evil hates good.

The United States of America is a flawed society. As it comprises human beings, it must be flawed. But in terms of the goodness achieved inside its borders and spread elsewhere in the world, it has been the finest country that ever existed. If you were to measure the moral gulf between America and those who despise it, the divide would have to be calculated in light-years.

If the academic and opinion elites of the world had moral courage, they would have asked the most obvious question provoked by 9/11: Were the mass murderers who flew those airplanes into American buildings an aberration or a product of their culture?

As far as those elites are concerned, only the first explanation exists. The 19 monsters of 9/11 were, for all intents and purposes, freaks. They were exceptions, no more representative of the Arab or Islamic worlds than serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer was of America. According to the elites, the hijackers happened to be Muslim -- only in name, we have been constantly reassured -- but were not produced by anything within Arab or Islamic society. Even to ask whether anything in those worlds produced the 9/11 terrorists -- or Britain's 7/7 terrorists, or Madrid's March 2004 terrorists, or Pales-

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tinian terrorists, or the Taliban, or Hamas -- is to be a bigot, or an "Islamophobe," the ingenious post-9/11 label to describe anyone who merely asks such questions.

It can be said, therefore, that not only has the world learned nothing from 9/11; it has been prohibited from learning anything.

The Muslim regime of Iran violently represses its people and (along with the Muslims of Hamas and of Hezbollah) vows to exterminate the nation of Israel. Muslim mobs murdered innocent people because of cartoons in Denmark. The Muslims of the Taliban throw acid in the faces of girls who attend school. Muslim mobs kill Christians and burn churches in Iraq, Egypt, Nigeria and elsewhere. And we are told that the mere mention of these facts is an act of bigotry.

After 9/11, the normal and decent question that normal and decent people -- people who fully and happily recognize the existence of vast numbers of normal and decent Muslims in the world -- would have posed is this: What has happened in the Arab world and parts of the Muslim world?

But as this, the most obvious question that 9/11 prompted, has not been allowed to be asked, what lessons can possibly be learned?

The answer is, of course, none.

But that has not stopped our media and academic elites from drawing lessons.

And what are those lessons? One is that America -- not the Islamic world -- must engage in moral introspection. The other is that we must oppose all expressions of religious extremism -- Jewish and Christian as well as Muslim, since, according to the Left, America's conservative Christians are as much a threat to human-

ity as are extremist Muslims.

Perhaps the best-known exponent of these non-lessons has been Karen Armstrong, the widely read religious thinker and former nun. She was invited to give a presentation on compassion at the nation's religious memorial service this past Sunday. And what was her message?

"9/11 was a revelation of the dangerous polarization of our world; it revealed the deep suspicion, frustration and rage that existed in some quarters of the Muslim world and also the ignorance and prejudice about Islam and Middle Eastern affairs that existed in some quarters of the West ..."

There you have it: Muslims have rage and deep suspicion; the West has ignorance and prejudice.

If that's what the world learns from 9/11, those who died that day died in vain.

— Dennis Prager,
The Washington Times
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 31

What, after all, is al-Qaeda's end game? They want the West to live under Islamic law. Hey, take a number and get in line. So does Imam Rauf, the ground Zero Mosque guy, who was in Scotland the other day at a "Festival of Spirituality and Peace" arguing that sharia should be incorporated into U.K. and U.S. law. He's such a "moderate Muslim" that he's subsidized with your tax dollars: The State Department bought thousands of copies of his unreadable book to distribute at U.S.-embassy events throughout the Middle East, and they paid for his book tour, which they've never offered to do for me. Flying Imam Rauf to the United Arab Emirates to talk to other imams ap-

parently comes under State's "multifaith outreach" program. Wait a minute: He's an imam, they're imams. Where's the multi-faith? If we have to have taxpayer-funded outreach, why can't we send 'em Jackie Mason, or that gay bishop the Episcopalians are hot for?

But don't worry, he's "moderate." Nanny Bloomberg went to the Statute of Liberty to tell the ghastly plebs he has the misfortune to rule to shut up about Imam Rauf's mosque. "To cave to popular sentiment," he thundered, "would be to hand a victory to the terrorists." If we don't build a mosque at Ground Zero, then the terrorists will have won!

In Edinburgh, Imam Rauf was at pains to reassure the crowd that his plans for sharia-compliant common law wouldn't involve any stoning and what-not. On the other hand, on page 58 of his 2000 book *Islam: A Sacred Law*, he says that with sharia you can't pick and choose: It's the set menu, or else. So Imam Rauf largely shares al-Qaeda's goal. But why hold that against him? So does the Archbishop of Canterbury, who's argued for the incorporation of sharia into British law. And so does Piet Hein Donner, the Dutch cabinet minister who said he would have no problem with sharia if a majority of people voted for it. And, even if they don't, the French de facto acceptance of polygamy is les banlieues, and the British Department of Pension's de jure recognition of polygamy for the purpose of widows' benefits, and the American Academy of Pediatrics' proposal that its members meet female genital mutilation halfway by offering to perform a "ritual nick" on Muslim girls, all suggest that, as long as you mothball your Semtex belt and don't rush the cockpit, the Western world will

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concede almost anything in order to demonstrate its multiculti bona fides.

A few months ago I walked at sunset from downtown Malmö to Rosengård. The gaps between Nordic blondes grew longer and the gaps between fiercely bearded young men grew shorter, and finally I was in the heart of Islamic Sweden. No blondes in sight. All the women were covered, including those who'd never been so back in their native lands: That's to say, they adopted, perforce, the veil only when they moved to Sweden. Sweden! Land of the arthouse erotica: *I Am Curious (Yellow)*. These days, they're yellow, and not so curious. Like the Israelis in Gaza, they're trading land for peace, and unlikely to retain much of either.

No one flew a plane into any buildings in Rosengård. No one had to. Islam's good cop provided cannier than its bad: The losers holed up in the caves want to nuke us. The shrewder Islamic imperialists want to own us. Ten years on, stealth jihad is proving a better fit.

— Mark Steyn
National Review
Sept. 19, 2011

Politics

In a relatively free society, leftists are called liberals; in a society of lesser freedoms, leftists are called socialists; in a society of even lesser freedoms, leftists are called fascists; in a society of even lesser freedoms, leftists are called communists.

This underlying principle is one that the lefty desperately does not want to be understood — namely that there is scarcely a difference between a liberal, a socialist, a fascist, a communist, or

a dictator. Either one graduates to the next level or on enables those headed leftward. The difference that remains between the monikers is that it is only the acquisition of power that distinguishes a liberal, a socialist, a fascist, a communist, and a dictator. That is to say, a socialist is only a liberal who has obtained more power; a fascist is only a socialist who has obtained more power; a communist is only a fascist who has obtained more power; and a dictator is only a communist who has consolidated power. In summation, the ultimate leftist is the ultimate dictator; is the ultimate communist; is the ultimate fascist; is the ultimate socialist; is the ultimate liberal.

— J.W.

Lefty's Playbook, p. 9

President Barack Obama's rhetoric shows that politically liberal Christians differ from politically conservative ones not only in policy proposals but in the understanding of human nature that leads to those proposals.

Let's think the best of our president. Let's suggest that his frequent vilification of corporate presidents flying around on private jets—he attacked them six times in a June 29 press conference—is more than a political appeal to class envy.

Let's say he thinks private jet tax breaks are unfair because he is philosophically committed to equality. Since President Obama has emphasized that “creating jobs” is Job No. 1 for him, let's think the best of him and assume he believes that taking away special treatment for corporate presidents will help the unemployed get back to work.

If those assumptions are correct, we should treat the White House occupant

not with paranoia but with pity. He's showing a lack of both business experience and biblical understanding. He and other liberals are showing that they don't understand original sin.

People without business experience might think entrepreneurship is easy. President Obama should at least scan, “I, Pencil: My Family Tree,” an essay written by Leonard Read in 1958. Read explains what it takes to make even a simple writing tool: Its components include cedar, lacquer, graphite, ferrule, pumice, wax, and glue — and huge numbers of people must be at work before the final product emerges.

The reality of social entropy is that enterprise doesn't just happen, since without consistent effort, things fall apart. Time is money: If “creating jobs” is really Job. No. 1 for President Obama, he should want business leaders to have as much time as possible to make more money, because they'll do that by expanding production, and that normally means employing more people.

Job-creating business leaders are public servants, and if a corporate jet saves them time, not only the company but the United States will benefit. I should also point out that thoughtful Christians in business work long hours primarily because they know God wants them to use the talents He gave them to create an environment in which employees can use their talents.

You may think this talk of public-servant executives and altruistic Christians is all kerfuffle. You may think corporate jets are just perks for fat cats. If you are thinking that, and if you're right, I have two words for you: So what?

Here is where original sin comes

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in. If men were angels, remuneration wouldn't matter as long as an executive's family simply had a roof over its head and enough to eat. But the impact of original sin is that money talks. Dollars, and maybe private planes, keep executives at the plow when they'd rather be golfing. It's a small price to pay for those who would build businesses that create jobs.

Why are we in a renewed recession? Liberals seem surprised when they reduce incentives and see reduced entrepreneurship. Those who study the Bible aren't surprised: Might as well face it, we are naturally selfish. Economist Adam Smith knew from the Bible and his own observation that we should not rely on the public-spiritedness of bakers to give us fresh bread every day: They will supply our needs only if we pay them.

Liberals who don't acknowledge this are patsies for socialist appeals that claim tax increases won't affect productivity. But listen to this internet wail from one executive: "I already had to lay off 8 percent of my workforce when they passed Obamacare. My accountant could not solve the problem any other way. A tax hike only means laying off more people."

Hmm. Liberals might say this businessman should joyfully accept a reduced income, and so should other highly compensated people. Maybe they should — but most won't. Instead of demonizing potential heroes of industry, Washington should get out of the way and let more people get rich while making some others not so poor. Do corporations receive a special tax break for private planes? Who cares? Unemployed Americans need jobs, and President Obama isn't going to produce them by

giving speeches — but he can discourage those who can otherwise create jobs. Are many executives selfish? So what? Let's drop the rhetoric and focus on jobs. Employment trumps envy.

— Marvin Olasky,
WORLD Magazine
Sept. 24, 2011, p. 76

Is the earth currently in a warming phase? If so, is that a bad thing? And if it's a bad thing, what should we do about it? Former vice president Al Gore says yes, the earth is warming; it's a terribly, unprecedentedly bad thing ("the very existence of our civilization is threatened"); and massive government action is called for, something akin to war socialism. When speaking of those holding contrary opinions, Gore can barely contain himself. At an Aspen conference in early August he dismissed them with a string of expletives. At the other end of the month he went at climate-change doubters again, this time eschewing the cuss words but linking climate denial to what, for an imaginative liberal, are the darkest depths of moral turpitude. One day, Gore promised viewers of a webcasting service, doubters will be looked on like racists. What, are the doubters burning crosses on climatologists lawns? No, no; what the ex-veep means is, this is an opinion good citizens should not have. One day, we hope, we will look back on this shabby use of the civil-rights struggle with embarrassment.

— *National Review*
Sept. 19, 2011, p. 12

Marxism

Nazism and fascism were built on atrocities in action; no intellectual today

ignores their inherent brutality. Marxism gets a pass from the theoreticians, even though it's a theory that could be understood for what it really is by any moderately bright child. "It's taking other people's stuff," writes Mr. Kors. The abolition of economic liberty begets the abolition of social liberty.

In spite of the consistent record of Marxist dictatorships, many Western intellectuals prefer to attack the culture that guarantees their freedom, free markets and individual rights. They compare the world of a capitalist democracy, with its freely conceded imperfections, to the perfect abstraction of a socialist utopia. The abstraction wins. With historical hindsight, the hero worship of Mao and Che Guevara in the 1960s was as wrongheaded as it would have been to worship Hitler and Goebbels in the 1940s, yet today, Mao and Che are still not always regarded with the contempt they deserve.

When does the unredeemed utopian ideal expire? In 1949, several famous international intellectuals, including George Orwell, Andre Gide, Ignazio Silone and Arthur Koestler, published essays in an enduring book called *The God That Failed*. They describe their love affair with communism and their eventual disillusionment with it. But their disillusionment did not dim their expectation that socialism still held promise: The problem lay with Stalin, not in his ideology. Arthur Koestler describes his communist cell meetings in Berlin as "intellectual self-castration," where the rank and file participants had no influence over any policy decision. He blamed the time and place.

In his novel *Darkness at Noon*, Mr.

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Koestler is brutally honest in exposing the immorality of the communist logic. But, he still couldn't abandon his faith in the utopian idea that centralized control of economic planning (and theft) could be fused with a universal empathy for human life.

— Suzanne Fields
The Washington Times
May 5, 2003, p. 17

Why is it that when people want to describe particularly evil individuals or regimes, they use the terms “Nazi” or “Fascist” but almost never “Communist?”

Given the amount of human suffering the Communists have caused — 70 million killed in China, 20-30 million in the former Soviet Union, and almost one-third of all Cambodians; the decimation of Tibetan and Chinese culture; totalitarian enslavement of North Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Russians; a generation deprived of human rights in Cuba; and much more — why is “Communist” so much less a term of revulsion than “Nazi?”

There are Mao Restaurants in major cities in the Western world. Can one imagine Hitler Restaurants? Che Guevara T-shirts are ubiquitous, yet there are no Heinrich Himmler T-shirts.

This question is of vital significance. First, without moral clarity, humanity has little chance of avoiding a dark future. Second, the reasons for this moral imbalance tell us a great deal about ourselves today.

Communists murdered their own people; the Nazis murdered others. Under Mao about 70 million people died — nearly all in peacetime! — virtually

all of them Chinese. Likewise, the approximately 30 million people that Stalin killed were nearly all Russians, and those who were not Russian, Ukrainians for example, were members of other Soviet nationalities.

The Nazis, on the other hand, killed very few fellow Germans. Their victims were Jews, Slavs and members of other “non-Aryan” and “inferior” groups.

“World opinion” — that vapid amoral concept — deems the murder of members of one's group far less noteworthy than the murder of outsiders. That is one reason why blacks killing millions of fellow blacks in the Congo right now elicits no attention from “world opinion.” But if an Israeli soldier is charged with having killed a Gaza woman and two children, it makes the front page of world newspapers.

Communism is based on lovely sounding theories; Nazism is based on heinous sounding theories.

Intellectuals, among whom are the people who write history, are seduced by words — so much so that deeds are deemed considerably less significant. Communism's words are far more intellectually and morally appealing than the moronic and vile racism of Nazism. The monstrous evils of communists have not been focused on nearly as much as the monstrous deeds of the Nazis. The former have been regularly dismissed as perversions of a beautiful doctrine (though Christians who committed evil in the name of Christianity are never regarded by these same people as having perverted a beautiful doctrine), whereas Nazi atrocities have been perceived (correctly) as the logical and inevitable results of Nazi ideology.

This seduction by words while ignoring deeds has been a major factor in the ongoing appeal of the left to intellectuals. How else explain the appeal of a Che Guevara or Fidel Castro to so many left-wing intellectuals, other than they care more about beautiful words than about vile deeds?

Germans have thoroughly exposed the evils of Nazism, have taken responsibility for them, and attempted to atone for them. Russians have not done anything similar regarding Lenin's or Stalin's horrors. Indeed, an ex-KGB man runs Russia, Lenin is still widely revered, and, in the words of University of London Russian historian Donald Rayfield, “people still deny by assertion or implication, Stalin's holocaust.”

Nor has China in any way exposed the greatest mass murderer and enslaver of them all, Mao Zedong. Mao remains revered in China.

Until Russia and China acknowledge the evil their states have done under communism, communism's evils will remain less acknowledged by the world than the evils of the German state under Hitler.

— Dennis Prager
Jewish World Review
March 24, 2009